



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

August 11, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents, Public School Academy Directors, and Principals with 2014 Cohort Title I Focus Schools

FROM: Linda Forward, Director *Linda Forward*
Office of Education Improvement and Innovation

SUBJECT: 2014-2015 School Year Title I Set-asides, Required and Optional Interventions for Title I Focus Schools and Letter of Identification and Notification for Parents

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) provides districts and schools with this information regarding the changes in the approved amendment to the ESEA Flexibility Waiver of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA). The status of elementary and middle schools, alternative schools, and high schools that are identified as Title I receiving Focus Schools in your district is based on the academic achievement, improvement and achievement gap status of the schools and the ranking on the Top to Bottom List as determined by the MDE. Focus Schools are those with the largest achievement gaps, defined as the difference between the average scale score for the top 30 percent of students and the bottom 30 percent of students. Title I receiving schools identified as Focus Schools must engage in the requirements associated with this identification, which are summarized in the enclosed documents.

- ♦ **Letter of Identification and Notification** – A letter must be sent to parents of students enrolled in a school identified as a Focus School. The letter must be sent to parents of those students enrolled in the school in the 2013-2014 school year and those anticipated by the district to enroll in the Focus School for the 2014-2015 school year. Also to be included in the letter are the reasons for the school's identification and the school's and district's plans to improve student achievement and narrow the achievement gap. MDE has determined that the required letters should be sent so that parents will receive them no later than 10 days following public release of the Top-to-Bottom list, or August 26, 2014, whichever date is later.

Please note the following information about the required activities and intervention under the amended ESEA Waiver, effective with the 2014-2015 school year applicable to Title I Focus Schools:

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608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/mde • (517) 373-3324

- Schools identified as Focus Schools are no longer required to offer Choice/Transfer and Transportation for the 2014-2015 school year, or to continue transportation for students whose parents had in past years chosen to transfer students under the Choice/Transfer option. Districts and schools are encouraged to be sensitive to the burdens that this will place upon families and students affected by this change.
- Districts **may elect** to provide or to pay for transportation costs to allow students in the 2014 cohort of Focus Schools to attend a Choice/Transfer option school chosen for the 2014-2015 school year, and/or to allow students to continue to attend a school already elected by parents in prior years, using the district's Title I funds to pay for transportation costs.
- The district **may determine the amount budgeted** using Title I funds for Choice/Transfer and Transportation based upon locally determined need and anticipated actual costs for transportation, and such funds should be identified in the Consolidated Application budget as Pupil Transportation Services, Function Code 271.
- Title I set-asides may **not** be used to pay for Choice/Transfer and Transportation costs. Districts must discuss and obtain the approval of their MDE Office of Field Services consultant in order to use any Title I funds to support student transportation.
- **Title I set-asides for Focus Schools have changed.** The following provides a brief summary:
 - *No building set-aside during Year 1 and a 10 percent building set-aside during Year 2 and beyond, which the school must use to implement one or more of the following:*
 1. Option 1: Professional learning on implementation of a multi-tiered system of support and/or scaffolded instruction of students in the lowest performing student groups;
 2. Option 2: Provide weekly/daily time for teacher collaboration;
 3. Option 3: Contract for administration of Surveys of Enacted Curriculum;
 4. Option 4: Contract with the local ISD/ESA or MDE for School Improvement Review to provide an external perspective on processes to best support student achievement;
 5. Option 5: Professional Learning on implementation of Essential Elements for teachers with MI-ACCESS students in the bottom 30 percent;
 6. Option 6: Implement culture/climate interventions, use of time analysis or culturally-responsive teaching interventions as needed.
 - *No district set-aside during Years 1 and 2 of identification.*
- The **district** Title I set-aside for the 2014-15 school year is determined by the number of Priority and Focus Schools in the district and their cohort of identification. The district set-aside is required for Focus Schools in their third and fourth year of identification.
 - The required district Title I set-aside will begin in Year 3 of a Title I Focus School's identification and will be calculated as the sum of 10 percent of each Focus School's previous year school level Title I budget, up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 10 percent of the current year Local Education Agency (LEA) Title I allocation. The district level set-aside is required before any other reservations are made.

- During Year 4 the district set-aside increases to 15 percent of each Focus School's previous year school level Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 15 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation. The district level set-aside is required before any other reservations are made.
- In a District with both Title I Focus and Priority Schools, the minimum required Title I aggregate district set-aside is determined by the oldest cohort of identification of the Priority School(s) in the district. If all of the district's Priority Schools are in Year 1, then set asides must be determined as if the district only has Focus Schools. Refer to the Focus School set aside guidance for more information with one exception:
 - If in addition to one or more Title I Focus Schools in Year 3 a district has one or more Priority Schools identified by cohort as Year 1, the aggregate district set-aside shall be determined as that required by the oldest cohort of the Focus School(s) of the district, not to exceed 10 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation. The district level set-aside is required before any other reservations are made.
- A District with both Title I Priority and Focus Schools required to do the set asides will determine the aggregate maximum district set-aside of the LEA Title I allocation as follows:
 - The required district Title I set-aside will begin in Year 2 of a Title I Priority School's identification and will be calculated as the sum of 10 percent of each Priority School's previous year school level Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 10 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation. If, in addition to the Year 2 Priority School the district has one or more Focus Schools identified as Year 3, then the district set-aside increases to 10 percent of each Priority School's previous year school level Title I budget, plus 10 percent of each Focus School's previous year school level Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 10 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation. The district level set-aside is required before any other reservations are made.
 - During Year 3 of Priority School identification, the district set-aside increases to 15 percent of each Priority School's previous year school level Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 15 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation. The district level set-aside is required before any other reservations are made.
 - During Year 4 of Priority School identification, the district set-aside is increased to 20 percent of each Priority School's previous year school Title I budget up to an aggregate maximum not to exceed 20 percent of the current year LEA Title I allocation. The district level set-aside is required before any other reservations are made.
- Districts with one or more Title I Priority School may choose to continue to implement Title I district set-asides as in the original waiver language, setting aside a straight 20 percent reservation of the current year LEA Title I allocation in Years 1, 2, 3 or 4 of the Priority School's cohort identification.
- The district may determine how the district set-aside is allocated to each identified Title I Focus and Priority School; however, the set-aside may only be used for the MDE-identified activity options and must serve all of the identified Focus and Priority Schools.

- **A district-level set-aside during Years 3 and 4** of Focus School identification requires that the district must use the set-aside funds for one or both of the options below:
 1. Implement professional learning on research-based interventions aligned to the Focus School's needs, and/or
 2. Provide a multi-tiered system of support that includes scaffolded instruction of students in the lowest performing student groups if the Focus School does not implement one. If the school implements such a system, deepen or broaden the scope or enhance the fidelity of implementation
- The district may determine how the district set-aside is allocated to each identified Focus and/or Priority School; however, the set-aside may only be used for the MDE-identified activity options.

The MDE Office of Field Services (OFS) will advise districts and schools of the amounts of the **district level set-asides**. Specific questions regarding the amounts of set-asides required in the Consolidated Application should be directed to the district's OFS Regional Consultant. An enclosed document provides required interventions and strategies for the 2014-2015 school year.

Note that once identified as a Focus School the school will join a four year cohort of Focus Schools. If any of these schools are not identified as a Focus School after the first year, the school will continue to remain in their cohort for four years. Any Focus School that is not identified in any future years will be conditionally suspended from its accountability requirements and supports for that school year.

- However, if a Title I Focus School is not identified in its second year of the cohort and is again identified in the third or fourth year of its cohort, the accountability requirements and supports will resume according to that year's requirements. So, if a Title I Focus School is identified in 2012/13, not identified in 2013/14, and is identified again in 2014/15, the building's Title I 10 percent set-aside resumes and the district set-aside for the third year of identification begins.

District Parent Letters of Identification and Notification must be submitted to the MDE later this year as evidence of compliance with these requirements for Title I schools identified as a Focus School in 2014. A future communication will be sent notifying districts to upload the letters into the MDE Michigan Electronic Grants System Plus (MEGS+).

Sample/template letters are attached to this correspondence. All template letters must be revised by the district to reflect current and accurate information for the building and the district before the letters are sent to parents.

To reiterate, the above requirements apply only to **Title I Focus Schools**. If you have questions about this communication or need more information, please feel free to contact Greg Olszta at 517-241-4715 or olsztag@michigan.gov.

Enclosures

**Requirements and Supports for all Focus Schools
2014/15**

Requirements for All Focus Schools	Supports/ Resources Available at No Cost to All Focus Schools	Additional Supports Provided for Title I Focus Schools
Participate in the Superintendents' Dropout Challenge	https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-5235_53792---,00.html	District Improvement Facilitator technical assistance
The district will conduct data dialogues with Focus Schools and identify the Teaching and Learning Priorities that are likely to close the gap	MiSchool Data https://www.mischooldata.org	District Improvement Facilitator will model a process for district staff to use with Focus School staff using reports from MiSchool Data
Post the identified Teaching and Learning Priorities in the Focus Diagnostics section on the AdvancEd website by November 26 to use in the revision of the School Improvement Plan	AdvancEd website http://advanc-ed.org/mde	District Improvement Facilitator technical assistance
The district will hold its own professional dialogue about the system changes needed to support their Focus Schools in rapid change	Education Resource Strategies ResourceCheck Tool http://erstrategies.org/resources/details/resourcecheck_tool/	District Improvement Facilitator will engage the district in a professional dialogue using this tool on the AdvancEd website
The district will implement the necessary actions to facilitate changes in support of Focus Schools	District Toolkit http://mitoolkit.org	District Improvement Facilitator technical assistance
Revise District Improvement Plan	MI CSI resources http://advanc-ed.org/mde	District Improvement Facilitator technical assistance
The district will monitor and evaluate the Focus School's School Improvement Plan	MI CSI resources http://advanc-ed.org/mde	District Improvement Facilitator technical assistance
The district will report to its local Board of Education quarterly on the progress of its Focus Schools		District Improvement Facilitator technical assistance

Additional Requirements for Title I Focus Schools
<p>The District will collaborate with the District Improvement Facilitator to create milestones of implementation progress that will be reported to MDE.</p>
<p>District Title I Obligation begins in Year 3 of a Focus School's identification <i>(All regular Title I rules apply when using set-asides).</i></p> <p>The required district set-aside will be calculated as the sum of 10% of each Focus School's previous year Title I budget, up to a maximum 10% district set-aside. During Year 4, the district set-aside increased to an additional 15% of each Focus School's previous year Title I budget up to a maximum of 15% district set-aside.</p>
<p><i>All regular Title I rules apply when using set-asides.</i></p> <p>In years 3 and 4, a District may choose from the options below:</p> <p>Option 1: Provide a multi-tiered system of supports that includes scaffolded instruction for SWD and ELL students if the school does not currently implement one. If the school implements such a system, deepen or broaden the scope or enhance the fidelity of its implementation.</p> <p>Option 2: Professional learning on research-based interventions aligned to building's needs assessment.</p>
<p><i>All regular Title I rules apply when using set-asides.</i></p> <p>Building Level 10% Obligation beginning in Year 2 of identification</p>
<p>Select at least one of the options below:</p> <p>Option 1: Professional development on implementation of multi-tiered system of supports and/or scaffolded instruction of students in lowest performing student groups.</p> <p>Option 2: Provide weekly/daily time for teacher collaboration.</p> <p>Option 3: Contract for the administration of Surveys of Enacted Curriculum.</p> <p>Option 4: Contract with the local ISD/ESA for a School Improvement Review or AdvancEd Michigan for a School Diagnostic Review, which will give the school an external perspective on processes that best support student achievement.</p> <p>Option 5: Professional learning about implementing the Essential Elements for teachers with MI-ACCESS students in the bottom 30%.</p> <p>Option 6: Culture/climate interventions, use of time analysis or culturally-responsive teaching interventions as needed.</p>

SAMPLE 2014 FOCUS SCHOOL COHORT NOTIFICATION TEMPLATE

<Date>

<Parent>

<Address>

<City, State, Zip>

Dear <Parent>:

Your child is a student at <ABC School>. You know that your child is important to us and that we want to provide every opportunity for success. Each school in Michigan is required to test students every year using the <Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests/Michigan Merit Exam (MME)>. The results of these tests, as well as participation on the tests are used to determine whether our school is meeting Michigan School Proficiency Targets and where it ranks in a "Top to Bottom" list of schools and their performance. As a result of this ranking in a "Top to Bottom" list of schools and their performance, a low achieving school may be identified as a Priority or Focus School. Focus Schools are those with the largest achievement gaps, defined as the difference between the average scale score for the top 30 percent of students and the bottom 30 percent of students. This year, <ABC School> is identified as a Focus School because of the size of the gap in achievement between the highest performing and the lowest performing students in the school.

In order to address this problem, <explain what the school is doing to address the problem and how the district is helping—see attached Focus School Identification Letter Requirements>.

To discuss this information further, please call <name and number> and <he/she/they> will be happy to help you.

Sincerely,

School Official

Focus School Identification Letter Requirements

- ☐ Letter explains what identification as a Focus School means.
- ☐ Letter explains the reasons for identification as a Focus School in 2014 (be specific as to the gap and those in the bottom 30 percent of students).
- ☐ Letter includes a description of what the **school and district** are doing to improve student achievement. The following provides a *partial list of required and/or optional activities and interventions* that may be described in the letter, as appropriate:
 - The district will implement a multi-tiered system of supports that includes scaffolded instruction for students with disabilities and English Language Learner students. (If the school implements such a system, deepen or broaden the scope or enhance the fidelity of its implementation.)
 - The school and district are collaborating with the MDE and its MI Excel partner organizations to better understand the school's strengths and weaknesses by looking at the achievement data more closely and to make changes in how instruction is delivered in the classroom toward closing the achievement gap.
 - The school is working with the ISD and a School Support Team to develop and implement new strategies for classroom instruction to improve teaching methods and enhance student achievement.
 - The school is implementing the Superintendent's Dropout Challenge to assist students at-risk of dropping out of school.
 - The district will monitor and evaluate the Focus School's School Improvement Plan.
 - The school will implement professional learning on research-based interventions aligned to building's needs assessment.
 - The school will provide weekly/daily time for teacher collaboration.
 - The school will contract for the administration of Surveys of Enacted Curriculum.
 - The school will contract with the local ISD/ESA for a School Improvement Review which will give the school an external perspective on processes that best support student achievement.
 - The school is providing additional professional learning about implementing the Essential Elements for teachers with students in the bottom 30 percent.
 - The school will provide culture/climate interventions, use of time analysis, or culturally-responsive teaching interventions.